

GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

September 26, 2012

Honorable Roy J. McDonald
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building
Room 918
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Senator McDonald:



I am aware that you were unsuccessful in your Senate primary. I am sorry for your loss.

While I am not well informed on your local politics, I do believe that your support of marriage equality was a contributing factor to your defeat. Senator Saland and Senator Grisanti also paid a price for their vote, but it was not politically fatal for them.

I believe one of the greatest challenges facing the integrity of our political system is the disproportionate power of the political extremists – on both sides of the aisle. I believe government inaction on many levels, and in particular legislative gridlock, is often attributable to fear of political reprisal from those extremists.

It is my view that representative democracies work best when we elect people of substance and integrity to exercise their best judgment. When an elected official votes his or her conscience, especially when it's not easy, I respect it. I was raised in a tradition which valued political courage, honor and integrity over political success. I hope to pass on those values.

I accept personal responsibility for proposing and strongly advocating the marriage equality legislation, and I remember personally asking for your support. You stood up for your principles, for equality and for a population long victimized. It is now evident that you paid a political price for your convictions. You should not be left to stand alone now.

I understand that you are at a crossroads, and I do not presume to understand your politics or offer advice as to what is the best course for you to pursue for your career and your family beyond this: follow your heart, it has served you well thus far.

For me, while this situation is politically complicated, it is personally simple. Please know this, whatever you decide it would be my honor to stand with you and support your decision and effort. I don't know if an Independent candidacy would be successful on Election Day or if it is even viable, but if you decide to go forward with your campaign you will have my full endorsement. If you choose not to run and to unify your party, I respect and understand that choice as well. This is a most personal decision and I believe that either way you can't lose because you have already won – you have done what you think is right.

Best personal regards and whatever you decide, I wish you peace and know that I am honored to consider you a colleague.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Cuomo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "A" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ANDREW M. CUOMO